

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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R 081021Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 816

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 0307

ROME FOR ILLING

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SGEN, HU

SUBJ: NEW CATHOLIC CHURCH APPOINTMENTS

1. SUMMARY: FEB 6 ANNOUNCEMENT BY HUNGARIAN STATE OFFICE FOR CHURCH AFFAIRS (PART OF PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL) THAT POPE PAUL HAS FILLED SEVERAL VACANCIES IN HIERARCHY OF CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS EARMARKS OF COMPROMISE SOLUTION. ROME HAS APPARENTLY FILLED ESZTERGOM SEAT WITH MAN OF ITS CHOICE BUT WITHOUT "DISCHARGING" MINDSZENTY AS ARCHBISHOP OF ESZTERGOM AND PRIMATE OF HUNGARY AND PERMITTING HIM TO CONTINUE TO USE HIS TITLES. ON OTHER HAND, GOH HAS OBTAINED VATICAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LEGITIMACY OF SOCIALIST ORDER IN HUNGARY BY PERMITTING GOH TO APPROVE APPOINTMENTS AND PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL TO ANNOUNCE IT. PRESENT AGREEMENT APPEARS TO HAVE REMOVED MINDSZENTY AS BONE OF CONTENTION BETWEEN GOH AND VATICAN THUS EASING PATH TOWARDS IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN
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CHURCH AND STATE IN HUNGARY. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESS CARRIED ANNOUNCEMENT THAT DR. JOSZEF BANK, BISHOP OF VAC, HAS BEEN APPOINTED ARCHBISHOP OF EGER AND IMRE KISBERK, APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF SZEKESFEHERVAR AND ESZTERGOM, AS DIOCESAN BISHOP OF SZEKESFEHERVAR. LASZLO KADAR ALSO NAMED APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF VESZPREM AND DR. LASZLO LEKAI, UNTIL NOW APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF VESZPREM, AS APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF ESZTERGOM. ON BASIS OF DECREE 22 OF 1957 PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL GAVE ITS PRIOR APPROVAL TO APPOINTMENTS. AT SAME TIME APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED GOH ALSO PUBLISHED "RETIREMENT" OF CARDINAL MINDSZENTY AS ARCHBISHOP OF ESZTERGOM AND PRIMATE OF HUNGARY, A MOVE PERHAPS RENDERED SOMEWHAT EASIER BY POPE'S RECENT EMPHASIS ON NEED TO RETIRE SOME OF CHURCH'S MORE ANCIENT LEADERS TO MAKE ROOM FOR YOUNGER BLOOD.

3. APPOINTMENT OF LEKAI, ONE-TIME SECRETARY TO MINDSZENTY, AS APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF ESZTERGOM IS MOST SIGNIFICANT AND APPEARS AS FIRST STEP IN RENEWED VATICAN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH HUNGARY. NEW APPOINTMENT FALLS SHORT OF NAMING LEKAI AS ARCHBISHOP OF ESZTERGOM, THUS LEAVING MINDSZENTY FREE TO CONTINUE TO USE TITLE (LARGELY HONORARY) OF ARCHBISHOP OF ESZTERGOM AND PRIMATE OF HUNGARY. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT BY GOH SIMPLY STATES THAT POPE PAUL HAS DECLARED MINDSZENTY'S POSTS TO BE "VACANT UNDER CANON LAW". WHETHER LEKAI ULTIMATELY BECOMES ARCHBISHOP OF ESZTERGOM AND PRIMATE OF HUNGARY MUST AWAIT FUTURE EVENTS, FIRST AMONG THEM PRESUMABLY DEATH OF MINDSZENTY. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT UNDER CANON LAW NOT EVEN POPE CAN REMOVE BISHOP FROM HIS DIOCESE. THUS, THERE IS NO QUESTION OF MINDSZENTY BEING "DISCHARGED".

4. ANNOUNCEMENT UNDOUBTEDLY CULMINATION OF LONG AND DIFFICULT BARGAINING BETWEEN GOH AND VATICAN WITH FORMER REFUSING TO PERMIT APPOINTMENTS OF BISHOPS AS LONG AS MINDSZENTY CONSIDERED AS OCCUPYING HIS CHURCH POSITIONS. GOH HAS LONG BEEN ADAMANT IN ITS ATTITUDE THAT AS LEGITIMATE SUCCESSOR TO PREVIOUS HUNGARIAN

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REGIMES IT STILL HAS RIGHT TO APPROVE VATICAN APPOINTMENTS UNDER PRIVILEGE GRANTED BY VATICAN TO HUNGARIAN KINGS CENTURIES AGO. SINCE 1969 WHEN A NUMBER OF EPISCOPAL SEES WERE FILLED BY VATICAN APPOINTEES ACCEPTABLE TO GOH, KADAR REGIME HAS SOUGHT TO FILL REMAINING FIVE DIOCESES HEADED BY APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATORS WITH FOUR RESIDENT BISHOPS AND ONE RESIDENT ARCHBISHOP WHO WOULD TAKE OATH TO UPHOLD CONSTITUTION AND IN SO

DOING PAYING OBEISANCE TO LEGITIMACY OF NEW SOCIALIST ORDER. IN THIS OBJECTIVE GOH SEEMS TO HAVE FALLEN SOMEWHAT SHORT IN THAT ONLY FOUR APPOINTMENTS MADE OF WHICH ONE IS ARCHBISHOP AND ONE A BISHOP.

NEVERTHELESS, FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES GOH HAS SUCCEEDED IN REDUCING MINDSZENTY'S FORMAL TIES WITH HUNGARY TO THOSE OF HONORARY TITLES.

5. FOR SOME TIME NOW POSITION OF CHURCH IN HUNGARY HAS BEEN HANDICAPPED BY ENMITY BETWEEN OLDER AND YOUNGER CLERGY. MANY OF FORMER HAVE BEEN CONTAMINATED BY ASSOCIATION WITH FASCISM (ARROW AND CROSS). IN ADDITION, HIERARCHICAL NATURE OF CHURCH HAS MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR CHURCH ELDERS TO FEND OFF ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFERENCE BY STATE AND SOME OF YOUNGER CLERGY HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF THEIR SENIORS FOR BEING TOO RESPONSIVE TO REGIME THREATS AND/OR BLANDISHMENTS. AT PRESENT TIME WE ARE UNABLE EITHER TO ESTIMATE WHAT EFFECT THESE NEW APPOINTMENTS WILL HAVE ON THIS SITUATION OR TO IDENTIFY WHICH, IF ANY, OF NEW APPOINTEES ARE "CAPTIVES " OF REGIME. IT IS OUR DEFINITE IMPRESSION, HOWEVER, THAT MINDSZENTY ISSUE NOW REMOVED AS BARRIER TO IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN GOH AND VATICAN. WE THINK, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO TALK ABOUT ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

6. EMBASSY WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY INFORMATION WHICH EMBASSIES ROME AND VIENNA MIGHT SUPPLY RE SPECIFICS OF AGREEMENT AND DEGREE TO WHICH VATICAN BELIEVES POSITION OF CHURCH IN HUNGARY HAS BEEN IMPROVED. WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE CONFIRMATION OUR INFO THAT LEKAI IS VATICAN MAN.
PEDERSEN

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